

Dis-chronic Experience of No-thing: Existential Analysis of Freud’s and Heidegger’s Concept of Anxiety

Abstract:

This essay compares Freud’s and Heidegger’s concept of *Angst*. Heidegger’s and Freud’s interpretations are guided by different aims: A) in “Inhibition, Symptom and Anxiety” Freud tries to define the concept of anxiety as a main element in neurosis; B) Heidegger’s notion plays a major role in gaining the existential meaning of Dasein. Despite the differences, this essay claims that it is possible to discover a common anthropo-existential interpretation. Anxiety marks the anthropological and existential passage from the *non-distinction* of the pre-subjective life to the *distinction* that emerges from the progressive differentiation of the subject from the world. From such a distinction originates the conflict between the tendency to regain non-distinction (as a pre-birth condition) and the necessity of multiplicity. In Freud, anxiety is the price for the renunciation of indistinction; in Heidegger, anxiety is encountered when this price is recognized as unavoidable. This is the core problem that this study takes into account in order to show the existential and anthropological role of anxiety. I will proceed with an analysis of Freud’s interpretation of anxiety, and then with the Heideggerian notion. The third part points out the affinity between them. Furthermore, the paper focuses on the dis-chronic temporality that characterizes the trauma of birth. In order to show the latter, we compare the temporalities of trauma and aesthetic experience. To perform this temporal analysis, the text adopts a phenomenological viewpoint (especially from Husserl).

Keywords:

Angst, Freud, Heidegger, trauma of birth, subjectivity, existence, temporality

Infant Sorrow

*My mother groaned, my father wept,
Into the dangerous world I leapt;
Helpless, naked, piping loud,
Like a fiend hid in a cloud.*

*Struggling in my father's hands,
Striving against my swaddling bands.
Bound and weary, I thought best
To sulk upon my mother's breast.*

* * *

*The Angel that presided o'er my birth
Said, 'Little creature, formed of joy and mirth,
Go, love without the help of anything on earth.'*

William Blake

Introduction

This essay intends to compare Heidegger's and Freud's concept of anxiety.¹ We will focus on the interpretation of the phenomenon of anxiety that Freud elaborates in *Inhibition, Symptoms and Anxiety*, and furthermore we discuss the *Lecture XXV* on anxiety (1920).² Referring to Heidegger we will focus especially on the explanation of anxiety in *Sein und Zeit*, and in *Was Ist Metaphysik?*.

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1) Henceforth our use of the word “anxiety” corresponds to the German *Angst* in Freud's writings, but in order to make a “graphic” distinction we preferably use “anxiety” referring to Freud's concept, and “angst” referring Heidegger's concept. Furthermore, since we recognize, in English language, a slight distinction between the two terms, we prefer to use both. The word “angst”: “Originally usually referring to intense non-specific anxiety or fear about the human condition or the state of the world in general, but later also often used of persistent anxiety or apprehension about a particular thing” (OED 3rd Edition, definition adjourned September 2019); The word “anxiety” has a wider and less precise meaning. It can be used as synonym of “angst” but its meaning seems more to relate to a psychological condition. One of the definitions of OED states: anxiety is “A pathological state characterized by inappropriate or excessive apprehension or fear, which may be generalized or attached to particular situations, and may be accompanied by physical symptoms such as tachycardia, increased muscle tension, and shortness of breath. Frequently *attributive*” (OED Third Edition, definition adjourned March 2016). “Angst” in Heideggerian language cannot be attributive and it is not specifically referred to as a pathological state. In conclusion, we are aware that in German both Heidegger and Freud use the word “*Angst*,” but since we consider the two notions close but not coincident, we have decided to make the most of the lexical distinction that English allows.

2) As Rollo May writes: “To study Freud on anxiety is to become aware that his thinking on the topic was in process of *evolution* throughout his life. His theories of anxiety underwent many minor changes as well as one revolutionary change. Since anxiety is so fundamental a question, it cannot be given any simple answers; Freud significantly confesses ... that he is still presenting hypotheses rather than a ‘final solution to the problem.’” May, *The Meaning of Anxiety*, 123.

At first glance, one can observe that the only point of contact between the two interpretations is terminological. This first observation is only a starting point for the development of an investigation that allows for pointing out a deeper affinity. It is clear that both Heidegger's and Freud's notions are guided by different aims: on the one hand, Freud tries to define the concept of anxiety as a main element of neurosis; on the other hand, Heidegger's concept plays a major role in gaining the existential meaning of *Dasein*. From this general point of view one can observe nothing but a great distance between the two conceptions. Here, we want to show that, despite the differences, a common anthropo-existential interpretation of the human being can be detected. This interpretation: 1) leads to the inner "dialectic," on which the development of subjectivity is based, and points out 2) the peculiar temporal structure of anxiety, which from a phenomenological viewpoint reveals the dis-chronic temporality of the experience of trauma. Anxiety marks the anthropological and existential passage from the *non-distinction* of the pre-subjective life to the *distinction* that emerges from the progressive differentiation of the subject from the world. From such a distinction originates the conflict between tendency to regain the non-distinction (as pre-birth condition) and the necessity of the multiplicity. In Freud, anxiety is the price for the renunciation of indistinction; in Heidegger the anxiety is encountered when this price is recognized as unavoidable. This thesis leads our investigation to affirm, in both Heidegger's and Freud's thought, an anthropological meaning of anxiety.³

Firstly, we analyze Freud's interpretation of anxiety, and then Heidegger's. After these expositions, we will be able to show the anthropological relation between the two notions. We especially focus on three aspects that allow us to establish a relationship between the two authors: 1) the anthropological and the existential value of anxiety's experience, 2) anxiety as reaction to the loss of unity and familiarity between the individual and the world, 3) anxiety as repetition of a temporal dimension that is dis-chronic compared to biographical temporality. In order to clarify the latter, we explain the influence of the *trauma of birth* through an analogy between the general notion of trauma and the aesthetic experience considered from a phenomenological and existential viewpoint. We will see that these three aspects are interwoven and dependent on each other.

It was clear to us that the German word *Angst* has quite a wide meaning-field and comparing Heidegger's and Freud's definition of the term is not an easy enterprise. But, even if language deceives us and can be equivocal too, it is never casual or totally wrong. The analysis of anxiety's phenomenon allows us to build a bridge between Heidegger's and Freud's interpretation and this bridge, we think, is not found merely on a formal and linguistic affinity, but rather on an existential level.

1. Freud on Anxiety

1.1 Definition of the Phenomenon: Realistic and Neurotic Anxiety

Anxiety had a fundamental effect on the birth of psychoanalysis.⁴ Generally speaking, anxiety as affective disturbance⁵ is a feeling of anticipation in a dolorous or dangerous situation that is subjectively foreseen or actually

3) We talk about anthropology since the experience of anxiety is 1) exclusively human and 2) does not emerge from a solipsistic conception of the subject, but from dialogical and dialectical conception of human being. On the other hand, the subject we talk about is not only a natural being, and as such an object of a scientific analysis, but it is a peculiar being that *is* as being-in-a-world: it is the reason for referring to the "existential" value of anxiety. An anthropo-existential experience is not only peculiar to an *anthropos*, but it is also represented as a universal meaning of *Dasein's* structure.

4) We should note that the Freudian definition of anxiety plays a marginal role in modern classifications ruled by DSM. In general the greatest problem is considering the anxiety as *disease* instead of symptom determined by an unconscious conflict. Gabbard, *Psichiatria Psicodinamica*, 236.

5) Cf. Giberti and Rossi, *Manuale di Psichiatria*, 422–23.

perceived. Freud proposes two different theories of anxiety and, despite the differences, what Freud wanted most to clarify is the role this affect plays in mental life in general. Although Freud is not always univocal in distinguishing *Angst* from *Furcht* and *Schreck*, usually one can consider the word “*Furcht*” as related to a determinate object; “*Schreck*,” on the other hand, indicates a relation to a danger which is not in any way expected nor expectable – whereas “*Angst*” refers to individual conditions that do not involve a determinate object, or, in other words, it “disregards the object.”⁶

In order to understand the subject matter, we summarize the salient points of the two Freudian theories.

A) The first theory⁷ claimed anxiety “resulted from a damming up and inadequate discharge of libido.”⁸ An amount of undischarged libido could be transformed into anxiety: it means that first anxiety derived from the libido rather from trauma, and second that it is a consequence of repression as a self-defense mechanism. Within the scope of this first theory, Freud distinguishes between *realistic* and *neurotic* anxiety.

1. Realistic anxiety draws attention to something that is rational and intelligible: anxiety is a reaction to the perception of an external danger. It expresses the self-preservation instinct which depends on the ability of the subject to deal with a danger-situation.⁹ This characteristic determines the expedient part of the composite phenomenon of the anxiety, which Freud calls *preparedness for danger* (1a): the *affective* reaction signals an approaching danger. Anxiety’s other component is the *protective* reaction, that is, the *generation* (1b) of the anxiety as such: this characteristic can be inexpedient. If the anxiety is excessively great, it could cause the paralysis of the subject since the self-preservative instinct is inhibited and the flight from the dangerous situation is disabled. Objective anxiety does not constitute a clinical problem as such, but if the two functions (1a–1b) cannot co-operate and the strength of the danger-situation is overrated, it could be indicative of the presence of neurotic elements.

6) Freud, “Lecture XXV: Anxiety,” 395. The use of the word “*Angst*” – and its translation in “*Anxiety*” – opens relevant questions in Freud’s writings. As James Strachey claims, “*Angst*” is a word in common use in German speech and its use is not limited to psychiatric and psychological terminology; for this reason, Freud’s use is not always univocal. The general distinction that we have indicated can be deceptive if we consider it *stricto sensu*: a strategy to understand the Freudian definition of the word “*Angst*” and its cognate words “*Furcht*” and “*Schreck*” could be understanding what “object” means. The “determinate object” of *Furcht* and *Schreck* is a *real* one, something that the subject actually faces. On the other hand, when Freud refers to an object in the case of *Angst*, he signifies a “transformed” object, in other words, the *actual* object upheavals from the id, but it is transformed into a danger situation by the ego. Cf. Strachey’s “Editor’s note” in Freud, “Early Psycho-Analytic Publications,” 116–7. Also Cf. Erwin, ed., *The Freud Encyclopedia. Theory, Therapy, and Culture*; Brenner, *An Elementary Textbook of Psychoanalysis*, 69n.

7) As Freud himself indicates, the Lecture XXV on anxiety was his most complete exposition about anxiety at the time of its delivery; it contains the main core of his first theory.

8) Brenner, *An Elementary Textbook of Psychoanalysis*, 69n.

9) Different reactions to danger-situations can be determined by the degree of knowledge of the subject: for instance, a savage can be frightened by an eclipse since he/she does not know enough about this phenomenon, or a sailor dreads a cloud since he/she recognizes the signals of a storm. In order to have a standard descriptive account on anxiety see Oyebode, *Textbook of Descriptive Psychopathology*, 280–281.: “Anxiety is a universal and normal emotion. It is a necessary and adaptive response of the organism to stress. It is clear that levels of arousal relate to the efficiency of an organism’s ability to respond appropriately to a task: too little arousal and excessive arousal are both associated with poor performance... In rather concrete terms, a man who discovers that he is sharing a field with a bull feels acutely anxious and runs at top speed for the gate; if, six weeks later, when back in the city, he has a panic attack and has to lie down because someone mentions a part of the city called the Bullring, his response is clearly maladaptive and his anxiety pathological. Anxiety may also, arbitrarily, be polarized between *state* and *trait* (Sims and Snaith, 1988). Anxiety state is the quality of being anxious now, at this particular time, probably as a reaction to provoking circumstances. Anxiety trait is the tendency over a long time, perhaps throughout life, to meet all the vicissitudes of life with a habitually excessive degree of anxiety. Anxiety as a description of the experience of normal emotion is not different in quality, only quantitatively, from anxiety state.” We should advise that although Sims never gave reference to Freud, his descriptive approach is highly useful to understand anxiety as a phenomenon.

2. The neurotic anxiety – the truly pathologic form of anxiety – functions as the realistic one, but it is a reaction to not-yet-discovered danger: this “freely floating anxiety” (2a) affects judgment and disables the expedient functions of anxiety, namely the *preparedness for danger* (1a). In neurotic anxiety every event is interpreted as a premonition of something evil that can happen: the subject represents the future event by foreseeing the most dreadful of the possibilities.¹⁰ Freud considers also another form of neurotic anxiety (2b)¹¹: this kind of anxiety is characterized by a complete loss of the relationship between anxiety and danger-situation. Since anxiety is a composite phenomenon that can be fragmented, it could happen that signs of a danger-situation are missed; (the subject can have an anxiety “attack” or reaction without any feeling of anxiety).¹²

B) The second theory of anxiety (1920 onward)¹³ is the one that most interest us. Anxiety is still considered an affective unpleasant state but, referring to the now developed topography of the psychical system, anxiety is understood as generating affect which has its “actual seat” in the ego.¹⁴ From a structural point of view, Freud indicated three kinds of anxiety in relation to its source: a) neurotic anxiety, if the danger emerges from the id; b) moral anxiety, if the danger is a threat to the superego; c) real anxiety if the subject faces an external danger.¹⁵ Whatever the sources are, Freud considers here, on the one hand, anxiety as a *result* of an excessive number of stimuli – which might or might not arise from the drives, and on the other hand, the direct causes of defense mechanisms (and not a consequence of it). Following Charles Brenner’s explanation¹⁶ we can summarize Freud’s second theory:

1. Anxiety automatically arises if the psyche is overwhelmed by an influx of stimuli that cannot be mastered.

2. If anxiety develops automatically, the situation is called *traumatic*; the prototype of this traumatic situation is the *trauma of birth*.

10) It is an anticipation, but what it discloses is not properly the future as open horizon, rather it is the repetition of a traumatic situation that is anticipated.

11) According to Freud, neurotic anxiety is involved also in phobias. The freely floating and the phobic anxiety are independent but have in common the loss of sight of the threatening object, which in phobia’s cases loses its *real* determinations.

12) According to the theory of anxiety as *converted libido*, Freud claims that the libido is repressed and transformed into anxiety or an anxiety-equivalent, that is, a symptom. Freud detects a substitutive process that interchanges anxiety or anxiety-equivalence into a symptom (for instance in a compulsion, or in hysteric symptoms). We cannot dive deeply into the theory of the *converted libido*, but in order to summarize: “*The individual experiences libidinal impulses which he interprets as dangerous, the libidinal impulses are repressed, they become automatically converted into anxiety, and they find their expression as free-floating anxiety or as symptoms which are anxiety-equivalents.*” May, *The Meaning of Anxiety*, 125–6.

13) The main core of this second theory is expressed in *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety*. Cf. Freud, “Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety.”; Hereafter cited parenthetically as ISA with a page number. Regarding the genesis of the theory, see Erwin, *The Freud Encyclopedia*.

14) “The ego is the actual seat of anxiety. Threatened by dangers from three directions, it develops the flight-reflex by with-drawing its own cathexis from the menacing perception or from similarly regarded process from the id,” Freud, “The Ego and the Id,” 57. Freud corroborates his new interpretation of anxiety throughout clinical observation: the case of Hans, who refused to go out on the street because of his zoophobia, shows that “it was not the repression that created the anxiety,” conversely “the anxiety was earlier and created the repression” (ISA, 93).

15) Cf. Freud, “The Ego and the Id,” 56. Those three kinds of anxiety reflect an evolutive hierarchy: in a psychodynamic view of mental life, Gabbard exhibits Freudian second theory of anxiety with a table which should be a dynamic guideline to assist the clinician. “A developmental hierarchy of anxiety: Superego anxiety; Castration anxiety; Fear of loss of love; Fear of loss of the object (separation anxiety); Persecutory anxiety; Disintegration anxiety.” Gabbard, *Psychodynamic Psychiatry in Clinical Practice*, 259. We can also notice that in Freud’s later theory there is no clear difference between anxiety and fear, except for neurotic anxiety, the source of which is the id. Cf. Ewin, *The Freud Encyclopedia. Theory, Therapy, and Culture*.

16) Brenner, *An Elementary Textbook of Psychoanalysis*, 69n.

3. This kind of traumatic anxiety characterizes childhood, because of the weakness of maturity of the ego, but can be present in adult life in case that Freud called *actual anxiety neurosis*.

Anxiety, during the development of psychic life, shows itself as a strategy within the subject to handle a dangerous situation: it is why anxiety is indispensable for the growth of the individual. Throughout development, the ego acquires the capacity to generate anxiety, firstly in the presence of a dangerous situation and later in anticipation of danger. Thanks to the pleasure principle, in “normal” situations anxiety evolves in *signal anxiety* which allows the individual to inhibit or control the id’s drives.

In general anxiety is not itself pathological, but is a signal that activates the defense of the psyche – one of the most powerful of which is repression. This second theory particularly interests us since it allows for discussion of the concept of trauma and its relation to temporality.

1.2 Repetitive Structure of Anxiety

Freud was aware that the meaning of anxiety should be investigated deeper, especially in regard to its *metapsychological genesis*. The core of this affect is the repetition of some particular experiences, where the original one is placed in the history of the species: namely, it is not merely individual. Anxiety is not the reproduction of a prehistoric moment, but it can be thought, by analogy to the interpretation of the hysterical attack, as precipitating a reminiscence of the individual history; analogically, the experience of anxiety has a repetitive structure, but it references the history of the species. In the Lecture XXV¹⁷ on anxiety, referring to the trauma of birth, Freud clarifies how he talks about anxiety as repetition of an early impression:

We believe that it is in the *act of birth* that there comes about the combination of unpleasurable feelings, impulses of discharge and bodily sensations which has become the prototype of the effects of a mortal danger and has ever since been repeated by us as the state anxiety... the first anxiety was thus a toxic one.¹⁸

Later, in *Inhibition, Symptoms and Anxiety*, discussing Rank’s theory, Freud re-thinks the interpretation of the trauma of birth. Rank moves away from the idea of a physical or physiological inferiority and tries to connect economic and phylogenetic factors. He finds, in the process of birth, the first dangerous situation in which the upheaval of libido becomes the prototype of the anxiety-reaction. If anxiety is interpreted as *abreaction* to a trauma then, the inability both to abreact the birth-trauma and to deal with the initial amount of anxiety, eventuates a subject’s development of neurotic disorders.¹⁹ Then, in *Inhibition, Symptoms and Anxiety* Freud keeps agreeing with the relevance of the birth trauma, but he focuses also on three factors that have to be considered in order to take into account a new theory of both trauma of birth and anxiety. First a biologic factor:

17) Here Freud cannot refer to Otto Rank’s *Trauma of Birth* (1924), but he renews his interest in act of birth considered as traumatic directly referring to Rank’s theory in *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety* (1926a). Furthermore, the very idea of trauma of birth appears in Freud since 1909, when in a footnote of *Interpretation of Dreams* he writes: “Moreover, the act of birth is the first experience of anxiety, and thus the source and prototype of the affect of anxiety”. Freud, *Interpretation of Dreams*, 411f.

18) Freud, “Lecture XXV: Anxiety,” 396.

19) Briefly, central problem of Rank’s theory is the individuation. The story of a human being is conceived as an endless series of experiences of separation. Birth is the first and most dramatic event in this series of separations. Anxiety – although Rank does not distinguish *fear/anxiety* – is the apprehension involved in these separations. It is the experience of a braking, but also the experience of the individual refusal to separate himself/herself from the immediate position of security. Cf. Rank, *The Trauma of Birth*, especially Ch. 1, “The Analytic Situation.”

The long period of time during which the young of the human species is in a condition of helplessness and dependence. Its intra-uterine existence seems to be short in comparison with that of most animals, and it is sent into the world in a less finished state. (ISA, 154)

Then, a phylogenetic factor, which is inferred upon the development of the libido:

We have found that the sexual life of man ... does not make a steady advance from birth to maturity.... This factor owes its pathogenic significance to the fact that the majority of the instinctual demands of the infantile sexuality are treated by the ego as dangers and fended off as such, so that the later sexual impulses of puberty, which in the natural course of things would be ego-syntonic, run the risk of succumbing to the attraction of their infantile prototypes and following them into repression. (ISA,155)

The third is a psychological factor, which thinks of anxiety as:

A defect of our mental apparatus which has to do precisely with its differentiation into an id and an ego, and which is therefore also attributable ultimately to the influence of the external world. In view of the danger of reality, the ego is obliged to guard against certain instinctual impulses in the id and to treat them as dangers. But it cannot protect itself from internal instinctual dangers as effectively as it can from some piece of reality that is not part of itself. Intimately bound up with the id as it is, it can only fend off an instinctual danger by restricting its own organization and by acquiescing in the formation of the symptoms in exchange for having impaired the instinct. (ISA, 155–6)

The theory of anxiety as *converted libido* is not rejected. In 1926 essay, Freud, as we can read, considers this theory as still valid in descriptive terms, but if one intends to elaborate a *metapsychological* representation, it demands, as we have shown above, a different point of view.

The other important revision is about Rank's theory; the trauma of birth cannot be read in causal relation to anxiety. The birth can be considered the paradigm of all danger-situations, but it does not mean that there is an initial amount of libido that determines the following anxiety reaction. Anxiety is a sort of repetition of a situation, but this situation is not genetically or causally connected to the actual one in the way a lived-experience belongs to an individual consciousness.²⁰ Although Freud does not deepen into a discussion about temporal characters of anxiety-experience, this peculiar temporal dimension, which belongs to every traumatic experience, is one of the most fertile grounds for comparing the phenomenological, the existential and the psychoanalytical concept of *Angst*.

Freudian anxiety is connected to repetition, both as repetition of a traumatic situation and as a defense reaction facing a recognized danger-situation. The "repetitive" nature of anxiety is able to link this affect to repression, which, despite the later revision of the anxiety theory, remains one of the main sources of both anxiety and repetition. Freud's anxiety, as Havi Carel has claimed, "is the product of the return of the repressed."²¹ When a threat-

20) Conversely, describing the relationship patient-analyst and the "rebirth-phantasy," Rank writes: "The patient's 'rebirth-phantasy' is simply a repetition in the analysis of its own birth. The freeing of the libido from its object, the analyst, seems to correspond to an *exact reproduction* of the first separation from the first libido object, namely of the new born child from the mother." Rank, *The Trauma of Birth*, 4.

21) Carel, *Life and Death in Freud and Heidegger*, 123.

ening object is present, anxiety arises as repetition of something repressed which is made present as transformed. On the other hand, anxiety, as we said, is also characterized by its capacity to *anticipate* a danger-situation: does that mean that not only is anxiety a *representation* of a repressed past, but also a disclosure of future possibility?²² As we have already pointed out, the future we mean is not an open horizon, but a highly targeted perspective: *Angst*, as its etymology shows, is a sort of narrowing which allows for visualization in only one future dimension, namely a threatening anguished scenery.

2. Heidegger on *Angst*: *Angst*, Flight, and Disclosure

The notion of *Angst*²³ escapes any easy categorization. It is not a coincidence that the first characteristic of angst is flight. First at all, in order to understand angst, we need first to understand from what we flee when we are experiencing angst. One unusually flees from something threatening, and then we are led to think that the flight is founded on *something* that evokes fear. But, Heidegger argues, we can explain the word “flight” (Φυγή, *Flucht*) also as a withdrawing, a retreating to oneself without necessarily involving the action of running away. Understanding the distinction between fear (*Furcht*) and angst is of utmost importance. Heidegger comes to the distinction both throughout Augustine’s doctrine of *timor castus and servilis* and Kierkegaard’s interpretation of anxiety: whereas fear is always in front of an object, angst, on the contrary, is not provoked by anything determined. To be more precise, fear is always related to something that is *in* the world. Angst is a flight of Dasein from itself. This latter sort of flight does not involve escaping something in the world, rather it results in an escape *into* the world. Dasein that flees from itself finds refuge in the world of everyday life: the world is the treatment for anxiety.²⁴ The fundament of the angst has its “place” in Dasein itself, in its finding-itself-in-a-world (*Befindlichkeit*).²⁵ If one feels fear he/she tries to figure out how escape the threatening object; on the other hand, if *Angst* faces the approaching no-thing, then finding oneself in an angst-situation means being a complete stranger and out of place.²⁶ It is not something that becomes threatening, but it is worldhood itself that assume the threatening character:

22) We mainly agree with Carel’s viewpoint, but we point out the double temporal structure of anxiety, which is linked as a defense reaction to the past, but it is also as a signal, anticipation of future (threatening) situations. See also Fletcher, *Freud and the Scene of Trauma*.

23) See footnote 1, referring to Heidegger we prefer to use the word “angst”: it is not common in English, but we find it more precise.

24) This interpretation is consistent since Heidegger’s *Angst* is directly linked to the existential “being-toward-death”, which, despite its inescapable character, can be concealed by escaping into the world of *das Man*: “But along with this tranquillization, which keeps Da-sein away from its death, the they at the same time justifies itself and makes itself respectable by silently ordering the way in which *one* is supposed to behave toward death in general. ... *The they does not permit the courage to have Angst about death*. The dominance of the public interpretedness of the they has already decided what attunement is to determine our stance toward death. In *Angst* about death, Da-sein is brought before itself as delivered over to its possibility not-to-be-bypassed. The they is careful to distort this *Angst* into the fear of a future event.” Heidegger, *Being and Time*, §51, 235. Hereafter referenced parenthetically as BT with page numbers.

25) Joan Stambaugh’s translation of *Befindlichkeit* is “attunement.” This translation makes clear the emotive character, but it does not help to distinguish *Befindlichkeit* from, for instance, *Gestimmtheit* (that is translated as “attunement” too). The latter term indicates something with a *Stimmung*, something that is tuned, that has an atmosphere or, in other words, something that we can define *thymic*. On the other hand, *Befindlichkeit* is not only an emotive situation, it is an emotive situation that arises directly from Dasein’s being-in-the-world. German verb “*Befinden*” literally means “being located” (only in intransitive and reflexive uses, *sich befinden*) and only in a figurative meaning it means “feel” (only in intransitive and reflexive uses): then a translation that takes into account the whole meaning of the word could sound something like “condition-of-emotively-finding-oneself-in-a-world”. To conclude, in order to avoid making the text heavier, we mainly maintain the original term.

26) *Stricto sensu* one does not “feel” angst, but “is” angst; it means that angst is *experiencing* the dissolution of the world as relationship between the self and the other. Despite the different approach Cf. Goldstein, *The Organism*, 232.

This indefiniteness of the of-which, this nothing as nothing worldly, is phenomenally quite definite. It is the world in its worldhood, which of course does not give itself like a world-thing. As that which threatens, this nothing is very close, so that what thus threatens (the worldhood of the world or the world as such) in a way wraps itself around someone and takes his breath away, without being something of which one could say: this thing here.²⁷

This strangeness modifies the character of the world; it loses its significance for Dasein, it is no longer the correlative place of references (*Verweisungen*) for Dasein, instead it becomes *threatening*. The *In-der-Welt-Sein* becomes a total uncanniness. Becoming threatening, the worldhood as such loses its determinacy and faces Dasein not as something, but as no-thing worldly. This threatening no-thing is what leaves Dasein out of breath and then speechless too. Dasein cannot say anything about this no-thing, no name can be used to identify it since no object can be found. Then, what is the value of an attunement as such? Why is this modality of *Befindlichkeit* so important in Heidegger's philosophy? It seems that angst is a dead end, a situation against which Dasein cannot fight. And in a way, it is true; since angst is the authentic way of facing our being-in-the-world, Dasein cannot authentically avoid it. But paradoxically it is the opposite of a closure; namely it is a dis-closure. In an angst-situation we attempt to escape our own being but fleeing something involves that we perceive or feel something which we are running away from; if we feel the necessity of escaping from our own being, it means that we are open to it. This is the meaning of angst as dis-closure. The problem now is what does this dis-closure let us see? The answer is, the *being of the world as such*.²⁸ Usually we handle and use beings that are in the world; their meaning is inserted in a reference field and these references – as vectors in a forces field – pointing at us, reveal their significance in our lived space. Dasein not only lives in and deals with this world, but also co-belongs to it – it is originally familiar. In an angst-situation the world loses its meaningfulness and, the attunement of anxiety leads to a not-feeling-at-home; the Dasein is alone, paralyzed and unable to deal with the world. The condition of *solus ipse* is the condition to feel this uncanniness as no-thing. Behind the familiar mask of the world there is no-thing. But this nothing is not a nihilist assumption: it is the empty space that permits the dynamics of the “normal” life. This no-thingness is the condition of possibility of transcendence and of the transcendental being of Dasein.²⁹ To be clearer: the character of Dasein is the ex-istence, it is always a being that exists as ex-, out- and pro-jecting itself in the world. If the familiarity between Dasein and the world collapses, Dasein loses the ability (not the possibility) of pro-jecting itself. Analyzing this notion of anxiety, we have underlined three aspects; the first one is flight, the second one is the characteristic of dis-closure – through which the proper and authentic being of Dasein is exhibited – the third characteristic is the temporal one; anxiety dis-closes a *having-been* dimension. All these three characteristics allow us to compare the Freudian and the Heideggerian notion of anxiety.

27) Heidegger, *History of The Concept of Time*, 290.

28) The *being-of-the-world* as such leads to the disclosure of the *being-of-the-Dasein* as such. The following quote exhibits the relevance of anxiety's notion: “As a kind of attunement adequate for such methodical requirements, we shall take the phenomenon of *Angst* as the basis of analysis. ... As a possibility for the being of Da-sein, together with the Da-sein itself disclosed in it, *Angst* provides the phenomenal basis for explicitly grasping the primordial totality of being Da-sein. Its being reveals as *care*” (BT,171).

29) In order to put it in another way: an angst-situation provokes the experience of “to be in the world as part of it” (*erleben*) to turn in an experience of the “distinction between one's self and the world” (*Bewusst haben*). Goldstein, *The Organism*, 244.

3. Angst: Existential Revelation and Anthropological Price

This last part intends to show how the two notions of anxiety, in spite of their differences, share an anthropo-existential comprehension of the human being.³⁰ Before proceeding, we need to clarify what we mean with “anthropo-existential.” Psychiatry and psychoanalysis, as theories of human nature, different from physics or biology, do not have a unitary conception of reality; they have as objects (a) the ill-man, which is considered from a biological viewpoint; (b) the ill-organism from a medical perspective; and (c) psycho-therapeutically, but their object is a human being from an anthropological viewpoint, namely a being that is considered from his/her history, culture, value, and so forth, and in constant relation with other human beings. Though Freud often runs the risk of reducing man into a scientific object, regarding the question of anxiety, his effort to take into account the whole human being in his/her complexity is recognizable – as the review of his first theory of anxiety as converted libido shows. Furthermore, anthropology, Heidegger claims, fails if we demand something to be said about ontology but, on the other hand, it finds its justification when speaking about human beings from an *ontic* perspective. Thus, the aim of the work is to show that it is possible to confront Freud’s and Heidegger’s theory of anxiety from a perspective which, after Ludwig Binswanger, we call anthropo-existential; the “stage” of this research is the space of *Menschsein*, namely our investigation situates itself on the limit between *Mensch* and *Sein* or, in other words, between human being comprehended as *anthropos* and *Dasein*. We believe that the affinity between Freud’s and Heidegger’s theory of anxiety discloses this peculiar space.³¹

3.1 Anthropological and Existential Value

Both Heidegger and Freud underline the anthropo-existential character of the anxiety experience. Anxiety, Freud argues, is phylogenetically inherited:

This experience could only be a very early impression of a very general nature, placed in the prehistory not of the individual but of the species. To make myself more intelligible – an affective state would be constructed in the same way as a hysterical attack; and, like it, would be the precipitate of a reminiscence.³²

This interpretation, which is incomprehensible for traditional psychology, cannot be ignored even if it leads us in an “obscure region.” This region, which the *act of birth* belongs to, opens a different kind of temporality that

30) Although it is not our interpretation, we can just quote Kurt Goldstein who refers the anxiety not only to the human being, but in general to every living organism: “The manner in which individual creatures in general, and human individuals in particular, cope with anxiety provides insight into their nature.... it seems to us particularly important for the knowledge of the essentials of the nature of living organisms. Thus, it pertains not only to anthropology but also to biology in the widest sense.” Goldstein, *The Organism*, 240.

31) About the “anthropo-existential” viewpoint the main reference is Ludwig Binswanger’s work. We cannot dive deeply into Binswanger’s thought and work, but we are remanded to some writings that perfectly explain our points: Binswanger, “Freud’s Conception of Man in Light of Anthropology,” 149–181.; Binswanger, “Dream and Existence,” 222–248.; Foucault, *Dits et écrits*, 65–119. About Heidegger’s interpretation of anthropology and psychiatry, we especially refer to §10 “How the Analytic of *Da-sein* is to be Distinguished from Anthropology, Psychology, and Biology” (BT, 42–47); Heidegger, *Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik*, especially Section IV, part A “Grundlegung der Metaphysik in der Antrhopologie,” 205.; Heidegger, *Zollikoner Seminare*; furthermore Mazzarella, “Psicoanalisi, antropoanalisi e ontologia nei *Seminari di Zollikon* di Martin Heidegger,” 501–518.

32) Freud, “Lecture XXV: Anxiety,” 396.

embraces the whole species. From the Heideggerian point of view, a discussion about species does not make any sense, nevertheless Heidegger's interpretation implies a *universal* dimension of anxiety. Anxiety can be hidden but cannot be omitted; "Anxiety is there. It is only sleeping. Its breath quivers perpetually through Dasein."³³

However, talking about universality, we have to distinguish at least two meanings. Universal in Freudian terms means that every human being is able to experience anxiety, and only taking into account the *birth trauma* one is able to attribute to anxiety a paradigmatic value. On the other hand, from the Heideggerian viewpoint, angst is universal as a condition of possibility of experiencing fear, but its authentic experience is quite rare.³⁴ It is pretty clear that Freud and Heidegger, even if they agree with the universal *possibility* of the phenomenon of anxiety, are referring to something very different; regardless, the solution to the "riddle" of anxiety casts a "flood of light upon our whole mental existence."³⁵

The other universal aspect of anxiety involves the finitude of the human being. Angst as disclosure compels Dasein to come to terms with its vulnerability and finitude toward death. According to Freud, anxiety reminds human beings of safety and unity they have lost. Since the seat of anxiety is the ego, death-anxiety comes with the ego's drive to the inorganic – pre-birth unity. Then, according to both interpretations, anxiety makes humans aware of their finitude, namely their inadequacy to comprehend the totality of the world's phenomenon. In Freud's account, acceptance of the multiplicity of the world and the necessity of self-differentiation allow the individual to control their anxiety. Conversely, in the Heideggerian viewpoint angst and its bounded disclosure of the being-toward-death, does not have a self-preservative value, but rather an ethical one; angst allows for the authenticity of Dasein. Consequently, the cure for angst is its concealment into *das Man*.

3.2 Indeterminateness and Loss

Another point of affinity could be found in the general definition of anxiety as a phenomenon that implies *indeterminateness* and the lack of an object. As a corollary to Freud's attempt at a metapsychological interpretation, we find the interpretation of anxiety as reaction to the danger of a loss of an object. As Freud observes, the loss of the object leads to different reactions: mourning, pain, and anxiety. Freud describes the loss of the object with the clinical observation of the child's reaction to the absence of his/her mother.

Our starting-point will [be] ... the situation of the infant when it is presented with a stranger instead of its mother. It will exhibit anxiety which we have attributed to the danger of loss of object... Its reaction of crying indicate that it is feeling pain as well... It cannot as yet distinguish between temporary absence and permanent loss... In consequence of the infant's misunderstanding of the facts, the situation of missing its mother is not a danger-situation but a traumatic one... It turns into a danger-situation if this need [*that is felt as if only the mother can satisfy*] is not present at the moment. Thus the first determination of the anxiety ... is loss of perception of the object. (ISA, 169)

33) Heidegger, "What is Metaphysics?" 93.

34) "The factual rarity of the phenomenon of *Angst*, however, cannot deprive it of its suitability for taking over a methodical function *in principle* for the existential analytic. On the contrary, the rarity of the phenomenon is an indication of the fact that Da-sein, which mostly remains concealed from itself in its authenticity on account of the public way of being interpreted of the they, can be disclosed in a primordial sense in its fundamental attunement" (BT, 178).

35) Freud, "Lecture XXV: Anxiety," 393.

This situation greatly differs from the “loss of the object” that can be detected in regard to the trauma of birth; firstly, the anxiety of the infant involves other aspects (e.g., pain), conversely, in the traumatic situation of birth-trauma, anxiety is the only reaction that can occur since – “At birth no object existed and so no object could be missed” (ISA, 170). Then, analyzing through the situation of the loss of the object, the trauma of birth assumes a new role. The act of birth as such does not imply a missing “real” and “conscious” object but it is, anyway, the mark both of a loss and of the first phase of the formation of the individual³⁶ (i.e., the traumatic situation of missing the mother). Referring to Freud’s theory, the mother is an object that receives an intense cathexis; the first reaction of the infant to the loss is pain, the second one is not properly a reaction but an anti-cathexis, an ab-reaction, which is manifested as anxiety.³⁷ Anxiety emerges in a confrontation of a danger-situation in which the object is expected to be lost; in other words, the loss-danger-situation and not the lost-object. The loss of mother’s body in the act of birth takes part in the dynamic of anxiety not as loss of *this* object, but as indeterminate-loss. This indeterminate loss starts up a dynamic that involves the formation of subjectivity, and also leads the individuation of the nodal point where Freud’s different theories – *converted libido, cathexis and anticathexis, loss of the object* – converge. The convergence can be observed in the *dialectic* that involves the progressive individualization of the individual. From an indistinct phase – fetal life – the individual passes through a first distinction – the birth; this first distinction does not generate subjectivity, it is a *pre-subjective* phase in which the following distinctions take place. These distinctions are always related with a tendency to return to the indistinct (and to the inorganic). In this dialectic, which underlies the development of subjectivity, the origin of anxiety can be placed. There is an immanent contradiction between the desire of the indistinct and the necessity of the multiplicity. Every kind of anxiety (the newborn baby that loses the unity with the mother-body; the baby that is separated from the mother-breast, the child that loses a protective figure, the boy/girl or the neurotic adult that faces the powers of the id or the internal power of the superego, and the anxiety of death and also of life) has in common that the individual *must* distinguish, whereas he/she is attracted by the indistinctness. This dialectic is both an anthropological and psychological interpretation of an existential (structural) character of subjectivity. Anxiety is a *landmark* of the development of subjectivity; it directly references the subject’s inner structure and *history*. The psychological aspects of Freud’s analysis describe the anxiety from both a biological and biographical (individual) point of view; but only the metapsychological aspects are able to reveal an existential perspective. Anxiety can be interpreted as the price for the renunciation toward indistinctness, which the original and pre-birth unity of the subject/outside world implies.

The paradigmatic situation of the act of birth demands a reflection on the temporal structure of the subject, not as *this* subject, but as *subjectivity* that shapes its individuality *in/against* the world. This interpretation allows a binding of Heidegger’s interpretation of angst from two different perspectives: one is the character of losing-the-world, the other one is the temporal interpretation of angst. Heidegger’s notion of angst is

36) See above note 15 about G.O. Gabbard’s psychodynamic interpretation.

37) In order to synthesize: “Freud outlined a series of *typical* danger situations which may be expected to occur in sequence in the child’s life. The first of these, chronologically, is separation from a person who is important to the child as a source of gratification. This is often referred to in the psychoanalytic literature as ‘loss of the object,’ or as ‘loss of the loved object,’ although at the age when this is first perceived as a danger the child is still much too young for us to attribute to it such a complex emotion as love. The next typical danger situation for the child is the loss of love of a person of its environment on whom it must depend for gratification. In other words, even though the person is present, the child may fear the loss of its love. This is referred to as the ‘loss of the object’s love.’ The next, typical danger situation is different for the two sexes. In the case of the little boy the danger is the loss of his penis, which is referred to as castration in the psychoanalytic literature. In the case of the little girl the danger is some analogous genital injury. The last danger situation is that of guilt, or disapproval and punishment by the superego.” Brenner, *An Elementary Textbook of Psychoanalysis*, 77.

characterized by an interruption of familiarity with the world as *reference* and implies the “uncanny” feeling of not-being-at-home.

Angst ... fetches Da-sein back out of its entangled absorption in the “world”. Everyday familiarity collapses. Da-sein is individualized, but *as* being-in-the-world. Being-in enters the existential “mode” of *not-being-at-home*. The talk about “uncanniness” means nothing than this. (BT, 176)

Heidegger focuses on the loss of the immediate familiarity and involvement in everydayness.³⁸ On the other hand according to Freud, the act of birth implies the loss of indeterminateness and indistinctness. Both interpretations involve not only an indeterminate object (properly speaking a no-thing), but also peculiar temporal aspects that are related to the special temporality of traumatic experience. Anxiety and trauma are deeply bound; the ego, in fact, in order to try to avoid being overwhelmed by a potential traumatic-experience – in which the ego is defenseless and helplessness – releases the anxiety-signal. This kind of link postulates a diametrical opposition between an external danger and the internal one. Anxiety is not directly provoked by a traumatic situation, but it is a defensive reaction that works as a signal in order to be aware of a possible danger-situation.

3.3 Dis-chronic Experience: Having-been and Trauma of Birth

Thus, this trigger mechanism shows that the anxiety is related to the repetition of a trauma and takes part in the temporal structure of the traumatic experience. One question arises: what kind of temporality is involved in the trauma of birth? This trauma is obviously something different from a trauma that is referred to as something *happening* in the childhood or generically during the life of a subject. Trauma of birth is existential rather than being merely and biologically individual; the temporality which the trauma of birth belongs to is not a biographical one. Anxiety-reaction and experience is repetition of a situation that is dis-chronic, if compared to the individual temporality.

3.3.1 Trauma and Image-Object Consciousness

Let us take a step back; generally, trauma means any injury as a consequence of an external violence that affects the organism as a whole. The “first scene” of the personal history is not traumatic as such but can become pathologic only as non-intentional presentification³⁹ that breaks-into our *consciousness* – traumatic characteristics derive from phantasy and are activated by the instinctual excitation the event provokes. The trigger mechanism, the *Nachträglichkeit* (Afterwardsness), turns an event into trauma only after an intra-psycho elaboration. Trauma as laceration disorganizes the intra-psycho structure and causes the breakdown of the protective

38) It is true that in general being-in-the-world is pre-theoretical and immediate, and this ontological phenomenon is different from the world of the everyday life. Being-in is the condition of possibility of the everydayness: in fact, what can be lost is the ability to take part in the everydayness, and not the existential of being-in-the-world (Cf. BT, §§ 34B–35–36–37–38, 40).

39) “Presentification” translates from the German “*Vergewärtigung*” that does not have an exact correspondence in English. Generally, Edmund Husserl distinguishes between perception, which directly presents the intended object as *presentation* (*Vorstellung*), and *presentification* or representation, whose object does not have an in-the-flesh givenness. Both memory and phantasy are types of presentifications, although they differ in how their object are posited; memory presents object as having actually existed, whereas fantasy does not posit an object that can be fulfilled with actually having-been perceptions. For a synthetic definition see Moran and Cohen, *The Husserl Dictionary*, 260–261. Our interpretation of presentification is mostly from Husserl, *On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time*, see especially §§ 27–30.

barrier that defends the ego from the external world.⁴⁰ It refers to our life and lived-experience, but it does not really represent our recollected-past, nor a kind of phantasied object.

Underlining the work done by phantasy and memory in a trauma-situation, allows us to approach the discourse from a properly (namely Husserlian) phenomenological viewpoint. We believe that trauma-consciousness shares interesting similarities to the structure of the image-object consciousness. In order to make clear how those affinities that we detect can be interesting to comprehend the Freudian discourse on anxiety if we synthesize it with some aspects of Edmund Husserl's theory of image-object consciousness.

From the Husserlian point of view, an image-object (an object that is present as an image in consciousness, for instance a picture) is a presentification that has the character of the non-present; differently from a memory-object, the temporal structure of the image-object does not coincide to the temporal structure of the actual ego – namely, the image-object is only *partially* a present (in the now) perception.⁴¹ Referring to the aesthetic apprehension based on a physical representation, Husserl⁴² discusses the relationship between the viewer and the artistic object. He describes the experience of immersion of the viewer as an intentional switch which generates the *as-if* world. Despite the immersion, Husserl argues that a diaphragm is interposed between the viewer and the image-object. But, if it is consistent, a question arises; how can we explain the deep impression that some sorts of artwork evoke? How can we justify the common feeling of being involved in some artworks as if they belong to our flux of consciousness? One, we claim, should consider the image-consciousness from a different viewpoint; it could happen that the immersion in the artwork is so strong that the image comes to life and penetrates our “reality” – in this case we are aware of the ir-reality of the image-object, but we still *feel* its presence. The fact that we are, for instance, physically scared watching a movie, does not annul our awareness of the ir-reality; the surroundings are still perceived, but they are mixed with the world beyond the image-window.⁴³ This kind of mixture may occur just if the image-object has a peculiar character that go beyond the safety of the contemplative wall. We are talking about an *existential* relation that comes into play. This very peculiar aspect is the one that binds the image-consciousness to the traumatic one; both are present images that have the character of not having been in our lived-experience. As we said above, trauma-experience is not present as a memory, but it is re-presented after a phantasy work-out: this *after-work* makes an event traumatic and able, after being transferred into an external object, to become the dangerous possible condition that anxiety signals.

40) For the meaning and the translation of the term “*Nachträglichkeit*” we remand to Laplanche, “Note on Afterwardsness,” 265. “The adjective *nachträglich*, which is taken from current usage, is used by Freud in several ways. We can roughly distinguish three uses of the term by him: first, there's the sense of ‘further’ or ‘secondary’ – it relates secondary consciousness to a primary one. Strachey and Masson usually translate this as ‘subsequently,’ so it assumes simply the temporal meaning of ‘later’. The second usage follows the direction of time from the past to the future, and the third usage inverts it from the future toward the past.” The third meaning is especially important in the context of our work and, although Freud does not accept it, this third meaning seems quite close to Jung's *Zurückphantasieren*.

41) “I remember the illuminated theater means: ‘in my interior’ I see the illuminated theater as having been.” Husserl, *Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time*, 60. But if I look at a picture, the image-object (the subject of the picture) is present in my interiority, but it is present as non-present, and its non-present differs to the non-present of an object of memory.

42) Cf. Husserl, *Phantasy, Image Consciousness and Memory*, §§15–44.

43) This interpretation is not Husserlian, here we refer to the characterization of the peculiar unity of the image-object and its carrier; the carrier is an anonymous function, a “between” that localizes the image-world in the actual-world. This phenomenal inseparability image-world/oversight carrier determines the *sui generis* character of the image, in other words its being-window. It is just a metaphor, in fact between image-world and real world there is no continuity; it is this dis-continued structure that determines the I-splitting structure of the image-viewer's experience. Regarding this interpretation and its move away from Husserl see Fink, *Vergegenwärtigung und Bild*, §§28–34.

3.3.2 The Echo of a Quasi-Past in both Trauma and Art Break-in

A trauma-experience arises in the subject as a having-been that never actually took part in the individual history, and it is more evident if one refers to the peculiar experience of the birth trauma. What it is evoked is a *quasi-past* – an *as-if-past* – that reaches the subject as a sort of echo, a *reverberation*⁴⁴ that existentially belong to it. This echo of a *quasi-past* is a structure that art-experience and trauma, especially birth trauma, share. Let us think about a drama; we can attend the play in a contemplative way and analyze the drama in rational and psychoanalytical terms,⁴⁵ but it may be that the drama deeply affects us as if we were “transplanted beyond the stage.” We are not hallucinating, but we feel anyway the terror, the guilt, and so forth. In this kind of experience, we are not able to *judge* the drama, but we *live* its meaning as *reverberation* of a *quasi-past* that breaks-into our lived-experience. What emerges is a conflict between perception and imagination, it is not the calm flowing and eventually meeting of apprehensional fields: the double orientation of image-consciousness, is the clash of two entire worlds that are able to communicate thanks to their *existential familiarity*, which is the *authentic* and *existential* meaning of art, and also, analogically, of the trauma of experiencing birth.

The temporal structure of the trauma of birth is dis-chronic to the flow of consciousness and, at the same time, it is existentially related to every individual history; the traumatic experience of birth does not break-into the consciousness as an external dangerous object, but rather effects – and *affects* – the ego from a dis-chronic position. Its dis-chrony binds individual consciousness to an existential quasi-past or, in other words to the existential (ontological) level. Thus, throughout the analogy with the art-experience, we better comprehend the experience of birth trauma and recognize the existential affinity of Freud’s and Heidegger’s interpretations of anxiety reaction. As we already said, the Freudian and Heideggerian notions are distinct, but they disclose a highly comparable existential *structure*.

3.4 Dasein’s Having-Been

According to Heidegger, angst discloses Dasein to the comprehension of its proper temporal structure. Angst brings Dasein “*before* its thrownness in such a way that the latter is not known as such but is disclosed far more primordially in ‘how’ one is” (BT, 312). Anxiety closes the future⁴⁶ and makes the present meaningless, it brings back Dasein to its *having-been*, to its thrownness. The temporal dimension of the having-been, this temporal ecstasy, makes possible the mode of *how-I-find-myself*. It does not disclose a temporal past, but a *quasi-past*, the *past* as a condition of possibility of Dasein’s existence. Future and present are temporalized from the original-condition of Dasein; angst brings us back to having-been and reveals its repetitive character. Angst

44) “Reverberation,” the English translation of French word “*Retentissement*,” denotes a structure that, as Gaston Bachelard claims, metaphorically represents the essence of art-image as an echo of *trans-individual past* that decreases while it is falling into the depth of consciousness. This is a *reverberation* of the existential meaning that we have mentioned; it emerges from the trans-subjective character of an art-image. Bachelard describes the double character (subjective/trans-subjective) of the image-object in artistic representation; the image object belongs to a subject, but as trans-subjective indicates that it goes beyond the subject without becoming an object. It belongs neither to the author’s nor to the viewer’s past but is the *reverberation* of something that is ontologically referred to the human existence. Art arises only if it is rooted in *myself* and grows from the deep conflicts that inhabits the unconscious. Art evokes the echo of a *quasi* and *dis-chronic* past that resounds in the actual ego. Bachelard borrows this notion from Minkowski, Cf. *Vers une Cosmologie*. Cf. Bachelard, *The Poetics of the Space*.

45) Cf. Freud, “Some Character-types Met with in Psycho-analytic Work.”

46) To be more precise, what is closed in angst is the future as *open horizon*, but not the future as *destiny*. Death as the most certain and authentic possibility occupies the whole future *ecstasy* narrowed by *Angst*.

has a peculiar temporality that, one can say, works as an “opener” for the comprehension of the three temporal ecstasies. It belongs to the very moment of the decision – of the possible decision – that is always ready to jump in a determination: “*This* mood arises from the resoluteness that, in the Moment, has its view to the possible situation of the potentiality-of-being-a-whole disclosed in the anticipation of death” (BT, 317). The *Befindlichkeit* of the “that” of the thrownness is repeated so that only an effective *possibility* is still there – the death.⁴⁷

The having-been of the anxiety opens a temporal dimension that is not the ontic/historical and biographical one but refers to a dis-chronic “that.” According to Heidegger this is the authentic temporality, as a condition of possibility of the historical and biographical temporality structured in the three temporal ecstasies. We think that the interpretation of this “Moment” – *out* or *before* the individual time – as original and pre-subjective (or better *trans*-subjective), is coherent also in Freudian terms.

Concluding Remarks

Dasein is stuck in a dimension of uncanniness and helplessness. Whereas Freud’s concept of anxiety is the pathological expression of an inadequacy of the subject who is dealing with a danger-situation. Heideggerian angst, as the most fundamental attunement that the *Befindlichkeit* assumes, has a positive value that opens the authentic being of Dasein. The positive value does not elude the pathological force of an anxiety; anxiety leaves Dasein totally alone and unable to take part in the world’s significance. Ontologically speaking anxiety is the most authentic and positive attunement, but ontically and anthropologically it represents a dangerous and potentially pathological experience. Furthermore, the analogy that we have put forward between trauma and the aesthetic experience should clarify what we meant by the existential value of the trauma of birth, namely the very experience of the dis-chronic and existential temporality.

This work, apart from its theoretical intents, does not forget the devastating pathological aspects of anxiety, but its aim was only to shed some light on the existential and anthropological aspects of a phenomenon embedded in the human life. Our analysis has shown that despite the differences, it is possible to reveal deep anthropological convergence of the two interpretations. Both interpretations show anxiety as a break of the temporality of everydayness and as an existential price that the humankind has to pay for having lost the safety and the immanence of indistinctness.

47) It is not *fear-of* or *waiting-for* the death: the expectation of the death is not the cause of the angst. We could say that the death is an ab-solution to angst. We have said that Dasein can find rest from angst in everydayness, but it is an alienation from and mystification of our own being. The death, on the other hand, offers the absolution. We use this word for precise reason: the existence of Dasein can be metaphorically described as a rope constituted of many threads (i.e. *Existenzialien*): then death is a cutting this rope. It does not solve or resolve the entangled and intricate texture of the existence: it just cuts all the bounds, within which the existence is constituted. Then, *stricto sensu* the death is not a solution or a cure, as well as lobotomy or amputation are not.

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